



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### ***DENVER MAN FACES FEDERAL CHARGES IN CONNECTION WITH UNITED AIRLINE FLIGHT DIVERTED TO SALT LAKE CITY***

SALT LAKE CITY – A federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment Wednesday afternoon charging Andrew Escobar, age 40, of Denver, with communicating false information endangering aircraft safety.

The charges stem from a Feb. 18, 2010, incident involving a United Airlines flight from Denver to San Francisco. The plane was diverted to Salt Lake City after a flight attendant on the flight discovered a note taped to the beverage service cart. Based on the note, the pilot decided to land the plane in Salt Lake City. The FBI and members of its Joint Terrorism Task Force responded to the airport to investigate.

The indictment alleges Escobar willfully communicated information, knowing it to be false, and under circumstances in which it may reasonably be believed, thereby endangering the safety of an aircraft in flight.

“An aircraft with more than 160 passengers and crew members was diverted to Salt Lake City where it undertook an emergency landing. The flight crew was subjected to considerable stress and the passengers feared

for their personal safety, had their travel plans disrupted, and were inconvenienced by the delays associated with the necessary security precautions taken in Salt Lake City. Given the circumstances of the case, I believe a federal prosecution is appropriate,” Acting U.S. Attorney Carlie Christensen said today.

The maximum potential penalty for the charge is up to 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. A summons will be issued to Escobar to appear on the charges. An indictment is not a finding of guilt. Individuals charged in indictments are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in court.

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